

DDS Family Rights Bill Public Testimony

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Dear Members,

As a parent of a disabled son with a high level of need I have extensive experience with the DDS system and total loss of confidence in their ability to accurately portray the wait list data that is so important to desperate families such as ours.

In 2014 there were 3,553 clients on the DDS wait list (Connecticut Health Investigative Team, May 2014) with a projected additional 200 new individuals per year expected (Connecticut Waiting List & Projections by Robin E. Cooper, September 23, 2008). From 2014 to present the reported list given by DDS drastically decreases due to restructuring of criteria, not by the number of individuals in need.

In fact, if we use the 2014 criteria (terminology) and apply it today the wait list would be closer to 4,000 individuals waiting, some for over 20 years.

Terminology needs to be better defined so that data of those who are in the system are not understated or shuffled into inaccurate categories. Limiting the wait list to only those defined as emergency or urgent does not correctly reflect the serious situation we presently have. To be accurate the wait list should include all who request residential or day services from the department who are not receiving those services or are receiving an insufficient level of service.

In closing, the passing of the Family Bill of Rights is the first step to define, correct and support families that have been misled with false hopes and promises unmet.

Sincerely, Marilyn DiTota

